

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, JO, MU

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN MILITARY AID TO OMAN

REF: AMMAN 454; USDAO AMMAN 301205Z JAN 75 AND 061036Z FEB 75

1. FONMIN ZAWAWI HAS TOLD US IN CONFIDENCE HE EXPECTS JORDANIAN CGS, LTG ZAYD BIN SHAKER, HERE AS EARLY AS FEB. 9. HE EXPECTS BIN SHAKER WILL GO ON TO DHOFAR ALMOST IMMEDIATELY FOR MEETING WITH SULTAN AND FIRST-HAND LOOK AT SITUATION.

2. WE HAVE FOL INITIAL COMMENTS ON APPARENT INCREASING SCALE OF JORDANIAN INVOLVEMENT.

A. UNQUESTIONABLY THESE ARE SEVERAL REASONS FOR QABOOS TO FAVOR GREATER JORDANIAN MILITARY ROLE IN HIS COUNTRY. SUCH INCREASED ARAB SUPPORT FOR HIS WAR TO DEFEAT DHOFAR GUERRILLAS AND PFLO DILUTES THE HEAVY IRANIAN MILITARY PROFILE, WHICH HELPS POLITICALLY IN ARAB CIRCLES. SULTAN ADMIRES HUSSEIN PERSONALLY, AS WELL AS GENERAL IMAGE OF JORDAN ARAB ARMY AS EFFECTIVE FIGHTING FORCE. HE MAY FEEL, OR MAY HAVE BEEN CONVINCED BY ONE OR ANOTHER OF HIS PRIVATE ADVISERS, THAT HAWKER HUNTERS, THOUGH AN AGING NON-PRESTIGE AIRCRAFT, ARE EXACTLY THE TYPE THAT CAN BE MOST USEFUL IN SUPPORTING GROUND EFFORTS OF SAF AND ALLIED FORCES IN

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REMAINING WESTERN THEATRE OF DHOFAR WAS. (USG CAN WELL

ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH ALL THESE REASONS, FOR EVEN ADMITTING THIS EMBASSY'S LACK OF MILITARY EXPERTISE, HUNTERS WOULD SEEM MORE SUITED TO GUERRILLA WARFARE ROLE, IF PILOTS AND SPARES CAN BE FOUND, THAN WOULD SOPHISTICATED BRITISH JAGUARS WHICH IN ANY EVENT WON'T BE DELIVERED FOR SOME TIME.)

B. APPEARS TO US, HOWEVER, THAT QABOOS IS COURTING TROUBLE IN GOING SO FAR WITH JORDANIANS WHILE KEEPING BRITISH IN THE DARK OR TRYING TO. IT IS UNREALISTIC TO THINK NEWS OF HAWKER HUNTER TRANSACTION CAN BE KEPT FROM BRITISH UNTIL HUNTERS LITERALLY SHOW UP AT THE AIRPORT. BRITS ARE SIMPLY TOO WELL ENTRENCHED IN OMANI MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT NOT TO KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING. AT THE VERY LEAST, SULTAN MAY BE GIVING JORDANIANS TOO MUCH CREDIT FOR THEIR PERSONNEL RESOURCES AND CAPABILITY TO ASSIST HIS OWN AIR FORCE. WOULD SEEM FROM HERE MUCH WISER FOR SULTAN AND OMANGOV TO DEAL OPENLY WITH BRITS ON MATTERS SUCH AS THIS. WHILE SULTAN MAY WELL SUSPECT BRITISH ARE STRETCHING OUT THE WAR IN DHOFAR (AND CERTAINLY SOME OF THE WESTERN NEWS CORRESPONDENTS WHO HAVE MADE ON-THE-SPOT ASSESSMENTS HERE IN RECENT WEEKS WOULD TEND TO SUPPORT SUCH A THEORY) HE NONETHELESS REMAINS HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON THEIR SECONDED MILITARY PERSONNEL, CONTRACTED EX-BRITISH SOLDIERS, AND CONTRACTED BRITISH FIRMS IN ALMOST ALL ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL PHASES OF MILITARY, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY IN DHOFAR AND INDEED ALL OF OMAN, AND WOULD RISK MUCH IN SEEMING TO DISREGARD THIS ESSENTIAL UNDERPINNING OF HIS REGIME.

C. PRESENT TOW MISSILE IN-COUNTRY TRAINING EXERCISE AND CONCURRENT DISCUSSIONS RE OBTAINING FOLLOW-ON SPARES AND TRAINING SHOULD BE OBJECT LESSON IN DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TASK OMANIS WILL FACE AS A PRACTICAL MATTER IN TRYING TO EXCLUDE BRITS FROM INVOLVEMENT IN EACH STAGE OF MILITARY UPGRADING AND AUGMENTATION.

3. RECOMMEND DEPT REPEAT THIS CABLE TO JIDDA, LONDON AND TEHRAN.
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